



Morris J. Berman Grounding and Oil Spill San Juan, Puerto Rico

Draft Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment

Incident Background

On January 7, 1994, the barge Morris J. Berman, grounded upon a reef off Punta Escambrón, releasing approximately 800,000 gallons of fuel oil into coastal waters near San Juan. About one week later, a secondary release of nearly 125,000 gallons of an oil/water mixture occurred during and after removal operations and scuttling. The oil spread along the northern coast of Puerto Rico, injuring resources along the shoreline and impairing their use for an extended time.

A settlement agreement reached on December 28, 2000, among the Federal government, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the parties responsible for the spill, resolved claims for natural resource damages. The settlement includes \$9,688,563 for compensatory restoration projects. These funds must be used to restore injuries in three categories: grounding-related reef injuries, lost recreational beach use, and lost use of national historic site resources. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Park Service, and Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources are natural resource Trustees for this incident. To fulfill their duties to plan and implement restoration using the settlement funds, they identified potential projects to address the injuries.

Draft Plan Availability

The Trustees developed a Draft Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft Plan) and they now wish to provide the public with opportunities for review and input. Those wanting more information about projects should refer to the Draft Plan, electronic copies of which can be downloaded from this website:

<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/berman/>. Alternatively, call 787-729-6777 or write to:

San Juan National Historic Site
501 Norzagaray Street
Old San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Proposed Restoration Projects

The Trustees identified and evaluated numerous restoration alternatives and projects grouped by injury category. The restoration projects and alternatives identified below are proposed by the Trustees for implementation to compensate the public for the resource injuries and resource service losses. The public is encouraged to provide comments on these proposed projects and alternatives as well as recommend other restoration projects or restoration alternatives that address the three injury types:

- **Reef Injury**
 - Modular Reef Habitat Construction
 - Acquisition of Equivalent Lost Services
 - Seagrass Restoration
- **Lost Recreational Beach Use**
 - Acquisition of Lands for Conservation
- **Lost and Diminished Use of San Juan National Historic Site Resources**
 - Improve and Extend Coastal Promenade
 - Restoration of El Morro Water Battery
 - Clean and Stabilize Exterior Walls of Historic Site

